

REMARKS

After entry of this Amendment, claims 20-49 are pending in the application. Claims 20, 23, 25, 28-30, 32, 36, and 42 have been amended. Reconsideration of the application as amended is requested.

In the Office Action dated December 4, 2002, claims 20-49 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The Examiner notes specific objections to claim 20, lines 5-6, and lines 12-13, claim 30, line 3, and claim 32, line 1. It is submitted that claims 20, 30 and 32 have been carefully reviewed and amended in order to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. It is submitted that the amendments to the claims traverse and overcome the Examiner's objection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Reconsideration of the Examiner's rejection is requested.

Claims 20-49 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Buchanan. The Office Action does not specify which Buchanan reference is being applied, however the rejection is being responded to on the assumption that the Examiner's rejection is based on U.S. Patent No. 5,906,071. Clarification of the Examiner's rejection is requested. Assuming that the Examiner's rejection is based on U.S. Patent No. 5,906,071, it is submitted that the rejection is improper under 35 U.S.C. §120. In particular, the Office Action acknowledges the claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §120 which includes the patent reference sought to be applied; namely, U.S. Patent No. 5,906,071. Under 35 U.S.C. §120, an application for patent for an invention which is filed by an inventor or inventors named in the previously filed application shall have the same effect, as to such invention, as though filed on the date of the prior application, if filed before the patenting or abandonment or termination of proceedings on the first application or on an application similarly entitled to the benefit of the filing date of the first application and if it contains or is amended to contain a specific reference to the earlier filed application. Therefore, the common subject matter disclosed in the present application and in U.S. Patent No. 5,906,071 have the same effect as though filed on

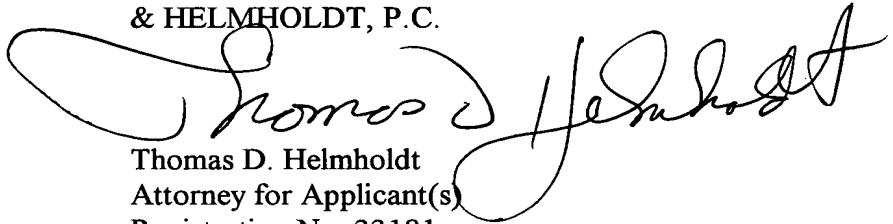
the same date as the prior applications from which the benefit of U.S. priority is claimed. Under these circumstances, a rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is improper. Reconsideration of the Examiner's rejection is requested.

It is respectfully submitted that this Amendment traverses and overcomes all of the Examiner's objections and rejections to the application as originally filed. It is further submitted that this Amendment has antecedent basis in the application as originally filed, including the specification, claims and drawings, and that this Amendment does not add any new subject matter to the application. Reconsideration of the application as amended is requested. It is respectfully submitted that this Amendment places the application in suitable condition for allowance; notice of which is requested.

If the Examiner feels that prosecution of the present application can be expedited by way of an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicant's attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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